

## Weights

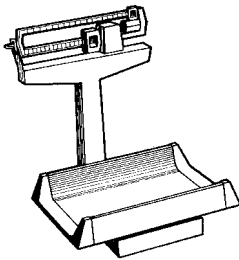
Weights are required on all WIC participants at certification visits and for infants at the 6 month mid-certification visit. Weights are highly recommended on infants at the 3 and 9 month visits, on women at all prenatal visits, and on any WIC participant at follow-up visits when there is concern about growth or weight gain.

Infants and children two years of age or younger are generally weighed on an infant scale while either lying down or sitting on the scale. Children two years and one day of age or older and women are weighed on an adult scale while standing upright.

### Infant Weight

This procedure should be used with infants and children 2 years of age or younger. Children one day over 2 years of age are weighed on an adult scale.

### Equipment



A beam balance scale with a tray and non-detachable free-sliding weights is the recommended form of equipment. The scale should be marked in increments of 1 ounce. The scale must have a zeroing adjustment (screw type preferred). Electronic scales are not generally used in Colorado WIC clinics because of the added expense for purchasing, maintaining, and repairing the scales.

NOTE: The scale must rest on a firm, stable table.

NOTE: Spring balance scales (such as bathroom scales) are not recommended. The spring counter balance loses accuracy over time and many scales are not capable of reading more accurately than one-half pound. Most bathroom scales are difficult to read since measurements are read at floor level.

### Technique

Weight should be obtained while the infant is nude or wearing only a dry diaper. If this is not possible it is important to record how the weight differed.

1. A sheet of paper is placed on the scale to protect the infant from the cold metal plate. For sanitation reasons, the paper is changed after weighing each infant.
2. The scale is balanced to zero with the paper on it.
3. The mother is instructed to undress the infant and place him lying in the center of the scale. If the infant/child is capable of sitting on their own the mother may place the infant/child sitting in the center of the scale. It is important to protect the infant/child from falling in this instance.
4. Check to make sure the infant is not touching anything other than the scale's tray. Check feet and hands especially if they are hanging over the side of the scale weighing tray. Check around the scale to make sure infant clothing or other objects are not interfering with the free movement of the scale tray (sometimes a parent will put the infant's clothes under the scale as they undress the infant).
5. The appropriate weights are moved back and forth until the arrow on the right-hand side of the scale rests in the exact center.
6. The weight is recorded to the nearest ounce.
7. The weights are returned to the zero position at the left-hand side of the scale.
8. The measurement is recorded on a growth grid for boys/ girls birth to 36 months of age.
9. The information is recorded in the ASPENS system on the WICPS105 Update Infant/Child Visit Data screen.

DATE	AGE	LENGTH	WEIGHT	COMMENT
	BIRTH			
Date	1yr	30"	22#5oz	
Date	18mo	32½"	25#	Weight obtained in Mothers Arms

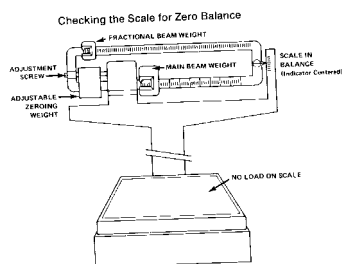
A frightened infant/child may be weighed in the mother's arms. The mother is weighed alone on an adult scale and then with the child. The mother's weight is then subtracted from the combined weight. On the growth grid record "weight obtained in mother's arms" next to the infant's weight.

**Note: An infant or small child must be protected at all times to ensure that they are not injured or do not fall during measurement of their weight or length.**

### Maintenance

The scale must be kept in zero balance. The scale should be zeroed before each session and whenever the scale is transported. To zero the scale:

1. Remove any objects from the scale.
2. Place all the attached weights directly over their zero positions.
3. Move the adjustable zeroing weight or screw until the arrow on the right-hand side of the scale rests in the exact center.



Scales need to be periodically checked to make sure they record accurate weights. This is done by weighing standard weights on the scale to determine if the scale gives the correct reading. For example a ten-pound weight could be put on the scale to determine if the scale gives a reading of exactly ten pounds. The weights used for this purpose are specially designed to weigh very exact amounts. Objects that weigh "about" ten pounds cannot be used to check the accuracy of the scale. Most clinics have their scales tested annually by the State of Colorado Department of Agriculture Weights and Measures. The Department of Agriculture tests the scale with various standard weights and then affixes a seal to the scale saying it has been tested. The scale should be retested any time there is suspicion that the scale may be incorrect. For purposes of WIC an infant scale should read within one ounce of the standard weight being tested.

#### #4 Practice!



1. Mark the following T (True) or F (False).

- A. \_\_\_\_ Ideally infants should be weighed without clothes or wearing only a dry diaper.
- B. \_\_\_\_ Bathroom scales are just as accurate as beam balance infant scales.
- C. \_\_\_\_ An infant's weight should be read to the nearest ounce.